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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT


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COUNTRY Hungary

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to Medical Research

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1. Q: What are the correct names, locations and physical descriptions of the physiological research facilities in Hungary?
- A:
- a. Elettani Intézet; Biokémiai Intézet (Physiology; Biochemistry), Budapest VIII. Puskin u.9. This is an old, two and one-half story brick building, shared by the two institutes. The biochemistry section was modernized after World War II. Equipment in the physiology section would be considered inadequate by US standards but competent work is being put out in a number of fields.
 - b. Fizikai kémiai Intézet (Physical Chemistry), Budapest VIII. Puskin u.11. An apparently well-equipped and well-staffed department.
 - c. Gyógyszertani Intézet; I. Kórtani Intézet (Pharmacology; I. Pathology), Budapest VIII. Üllői-ut. These institutes are located on the grounds of the so-called "Inner Clinical Group". Pharmacology occupies one and one-half floors of the Administration building and is adequately equipped. Pathology has its own building which was damaged and looted by the Soviets. Its equipment is being replaced slowly. The department was completely re-staffed after World War II, which greatly hampered its operations.
 - d. Kórélettani Intézet; Bakteriologiai Intézet, (Pathophysiology; Bacteriology), Budapest IX. Högyes Endre u. 18. These departments share a three story building. Their teaching facilities are greatly overtaxed. Their research facilities are spotty because the fields of interest of the two departments were readjusted after World War II. Since then the Bacteriology department has been purged and restaffed. Research seemed to progress steadily in the nutritional field in the Pathophysiology section.

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- e. Anatómiai Intézet; Szövet-tani Intézet; Törvényszéki Orvostani Intézet; III. Kórtani Intézet (Anatomy, Histology, Forensic Medicine, II. Pathology), Budapest IX. Üllői ut. These departments comprise a separate group of buildings close to the "Outer Clinical Groups". Their teaching facilities are overtaxed. There was an extensive change in personnel following World War II and repeatedly since. Research facilities should be adequate although somewhat out of date.
- f. In the "Outer Clinical group" there are experimental facilities in the Rusznyák (name of professor) - clinic (medicine) and at the II. Surgical Clinic. These laboratories are small but apparently well equipped.
- All of the above groups are under the direction of the University and thus indirectly under the Ministry of Education.
- g. Közegészségügyi Intézet (Institute of Public Health), Budapest IX. Gyáli ut. A modern complex, erected with the financial aid of the Rockefeller Foundation, it was doing research in the broadest sense of Public Health. It is under the Ministry of Public Health, and is well-equipped and well-endowed. Staff changes under political pressure greatly reduced its working efficiency up to 1949.
- h. Véraló Központ (Central blood-bank) was to be established in 1949 somewhere in Buda, in a new building with brand-new equipment. It was to do research in blood clotting as well.
- i. Repülőorvosi Intézet (Aviation Medicine). This institute was to be set up new since the old one was a total loss following World War II. It is under direct army supervision and has apparently unlimited funds. The choice of personnel was an unfortunate compromise between ability and political reliability. It will take considerable time for it to function properly.
- j. [REDACTED] postwar facilities at Pecs. During World War II all departments were adequately equipped for the intensive research work then pursued. The department of Medical Physics and Anatomy seem to have been re-equipped.
- k. [REDACTED] the situation at Szeged and Debrecen but both universities were built in the 30's and should be quite modern. Debrecen suffered a great deal from Soviet plundering.
- l. New facilities in early stage of planning as of 1949 were as follows:

1. The Military Academy buildings adjacent to the "Outer clinical group" in Budapest along the Üllői ut were to be taken over by the medical school.
2. All experimental medical departments at Budapest were to be centralized in one new 8 to 10 story building. The planned location of this building was changed repeatedly and finally the entire fund was scrapped, but the actual plans called for one department to each floor, a central library and a central division which would handle scarce and expensive research equipment like electron microscopes, ultracentrifuges etc.
3. Biológiai Kutatóintézet (Biological Research Institute), Tihany, Hungary. Located some 70 miles from Budapest. This is an excellently equipped institute. At latest news its field of research was to be narrowed down to plant and cell biology and investigations of the Michu-

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rinian theories.

2. Q: Were these research facilities adequately equipped for the programs carried on in 1949? What was the general status of research equipment in Hungary?

A: a. Most scientific equipment in Hungary came from Germany. Repairs could be made in Hungary and there was a small-scale but quite adequate local production of most instruments. The setup for this was such however that I seriously doubt it could be expanded to cover any significant demand. After World War II larger numbers of British instruments were imported and there were negotiations with Swiss, Swedish and Czech firms as well as with German (Soviet Zone) factories. [REDACTED]

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b. Electronic equipment could probably be manufactured in Hungary in the Tungsram plant to match most Western products, although the quantity would necessarily be restricted. The plant is probably used to capacity for higher priority non-medical electronic devices.

c. Glassware, particularly precision glassware was extremely scarce. Optical glassware, such as cuvettes, was practically irreplaceable.

d. Warburg manometers were standard equipment in most institutions. Phase microscopes have probably been obtained since 1949 from Austria and other countries. Deep-culture vats may have been arranged for through some of the breweries. There was no freeze-drying equipment in 1949. Electron microscopes and Tiselius apparatus were on order from Sweden, as well as an ultracentrifuge. More important, there were only two or three spectrophotometers available, none of them for medical research. In fact the lack of up to date photometers, precision scales and recording apparatus was one of the most important bottlenecks in research. Another bottleneck was the lack of tracer elements.

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3. Q: Were the supplies of chemicals adequate?

A: Chemicals, particularly analytic grade were in desperately short supply. Replacements came from the UK and to some extent from Switzerland. Czech chemicals were of such poor quality as to be practically useless. The same applied to dyes but since they were required in smaller quantities they could be replaced more easily.

4. Q: Were supplies of x-rays, drugs and medical instruments sufficient?

A: X-ray films were manufactured locally before the war and the Kodak-plant in Vác Hungary was working in 1949. The pharmaceutical industry was actually exporting drugs to the Near and Middle East. [REDACTED] that hormone-preparations like insulin, cortisone and ACTH would be in very short supply. Antibiotics were just starting to get ready for local production in 1949. Medical instruments were largely manufactured locally. [REDACTED] the situation was with regard to X-ray apparatus.

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5. Q: What, [REDACTED] were the deterring factors in the development of a research program in Hungary?

A: The situation was completely fluid in 1949. Up to that time the wholesale exchange of university personnel (where the overwhelming part of medical research was centered) prevented intelligent planning for any length ahead. In 1949 the Ministry of Education requested long-range plans which

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were to be based on a substantially increased budget. [REDACTED] tion to know whether this increase ever materialized, and more important whether the equipment requested could be made available from foreign sources.

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To my mind, beside the lack of certain types of apparatus and radio-isotopes, the scarcity of middle-echelon research workers was and probably is now the most serious bottleneck in any research program that may be adopted in Hungary. Practically everybody between the ages of 25 and 40 who had the chance left the country and this generation is now engaged in research or medical work all over the Western world. A loss of something like 100 workers in the field would be comparable to the disappearance of two thousand trained young medical research men in the US. The full severity of this situation will not be seen until a few years from now when the present prewar generation will have to retire. In most cases there will not be workers of the same quality to take their place, much less to train future scientific generations.

A people of eight million cannot have its independent scientific life. In prewar days Hungarian science was intimately linked with the German and constant cognizance was taken of achievements in the Anglo-American and to a lesser extent in the Romance literature. Practically every worker had a working knowledge of at least one western language. With the new generation the knowledge of these languages is discouraged, western journals are scarce, to come by and abstracting services are quite inadequate. The resulting isolation from the past and present body of scientific achievement will also certainly decrease the productivity and fruitfulness of research work.

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